

Conversation Exit Strategies

Ending Conversations with Confidence and Building Lasting Relationships



Ending a conversation well is just as important as starting one. A thoughtful exit leaves a positive final impression and creates opportunities for future connection. Research suggests that expressing appreciation fosters positive workplace relationships and prosocial behavior, active listening builds trust and strengthens interpersonal connections, and timely follow-up increases the likelihood of maintaining future connections.

3-Step Exit Plan

1. Expressing appreciation

Helps people feel valued and leaves a positive impression. Examples:

- I don't want to take up too much of your time.
- It was great meeting you.
- I really enjoyed our conversation.
- It's been wonderful talking with you.

2. Referencing specific details

Demonstrates genuine interest and active listening. Examples:

- I really enjoyed hearing about your work in _____.
- I found your perspective on _____ really interesting.
- I appreciated learning more about _____.

3. Ending with a future-oriented statement

Helps shift the relationship from a single conversation to an ongoing professional relationship.

Examples:

- I'd love to stay connected.
- I'd love to keep in touch in the future.
- May I connect with you on LinkedIn and/or get your email address? (or business cards).

Create a Connection Before You Exit

When appropriate, introduce the person you were speaking with to someone else before stepping away. A thoughtful introduction can help keep the conversation going, while making transitions more natural. This can create more opportunities for new connections. Share a common interest, role, or topic they have in common to help start the conversation.



Follow-up within 24-48 Hours

A timely follow-up reinforces the connection while your conversation is still fresh. Keep your email or messages brief, personalized, professional, and appreciative.

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Other Considerations for Follow-Up:

Personalize your follow-up by referencing something specific from your conversation, such as a **shared interest, helpful insight, or any lingering questions** you may still have. If you are able to identify an opportunity for future interactions, include a clear action or invitation to continue the conversation. This can include **meeting for coffee or lunch, scheduling a virtual meeting, sharing a resource, or making an introduction to someone in your network.**

Example Follow-Up Email:

Hi [Name],

It was nice meeting you at [event]. I enjoyed our conversation about [topic]. Thank you again for your insights. I look forward to staying connected and hope there are more opportunities to reach out again.

Best,

[Your Name]

Questions or Want to Learn More?

For more information, contact Julie Chobdee, Associate Director, Health & Well-being Program, at Jchobdee@usc.edu.

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